

House Republican Press Release

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Gearing Up For New Session



By State Representative John J. Ryan

Will Rogers used to say that "the taxpayers are never safe when Congress is in session", and since the next General Assembly Session convenes on Wednesday February 8, I can understand if you are less than enthusiastic at the news that your Legislature is going back to work!

Considering that I have recently been at several meetings or forums where economists prognosticated on the condition of Connecticut, I was intrigued at their 'take' on upcoming doings in Hartford. Most agreed that this year will be more partisan in tone (hardly a brave prediction since this is a gubernatorial election year, and the State Capitol has been steadily becoming more partisan for some time now), but they also emphasized the news that Connecticut lagged behind most states in job creation growth, and was a leader in having a "business-unfriendly" climate. And exactly why is that?

It is interesting to note that with all of the pre-Session marketing going on (as noted in our last column) the majority party has spent a lot of time touting plans for economic development. Of course, has the media covering Hartford done any analysis on why this "business-unfriendly" condition exists? If you have been a regular column reader over the years, or if you are a Connecticut Business and Industry Association newsletter subscriber, you would know the obvious, that every year, we have more and more bills that are bad for the business community, and every year some of them get through the system. As I try to say as often as I can, one can look up the bills, follow who sponsored them, and who votes for them, draw your own conclusions, and ignore the political marketing!

An easy example of recent legislation that has had a negative impact on the business community is our corporate tax surcharge, which was placed on top of the regular state corporate taxes to help cover recent deficits. This was supposed to "sunset", and of course (like the example of the also allegedly "temporary" conveyance tax increase), never did. Now that (surprise!) there is a projected surplus coming, are the businesses who, in effect, **overpaid** their share, going to get their money back, with the appreciation of a grateful government? Isn't it a little disingenuous for legislators to tout that they now favor reducing a surcharge that never should have been there in the first place?

Of course, there are some pro-business steps that the state officials could take, beyond holding "I care, I really do care!" press conferences. We could immediately, completely

eliminate that corporate tax surcharge or we could start phasing out the burdensome property tax on business machinery and equipment. If we really are interested in job creation in Connecticut, we could put a "jobs creation tax credit" system into place to reward businesses that actually do create new jobs. Or probably most importantly, we could address the most serious concern of nearly all businesses, namely rapidly rising health care costs, and enact a moratorium on further health care mandates.

To give an easy analogy: for years politicians talked about the need for major transportation improvements and funding but it was always, just that, talk (with little action). Last year, Governor Rell put a very large amount of money in the budget (\$1.3 billion) for specific proposals and then saw that it was enacted. If only the average governmental consumer (the taxpayer/voter) paid as much attention to what really happens as consumers do to statistics about SUV's and college choices, think how interesting our State government would be.

Please feel free to contact me with your concerns and issues. As your state representative, it is my job, and my priority to represent you and to make sure that your needs and concerns are addressed at the capitol. You can write to me at Room 4200, Legislative Office Building, Hartford, CT 06106-1591, send me e-mail at John.Ryan@housegop.state.ct.us or call my office toll-free at 1-800-842-1423.